

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCE Italian (6IN01) Paper 1A

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General Introduction

In this Unit candidates are required to demonstrate their understanding of a short Italian text (linked to one of the general topic areas of the AS specification) and to engage in general discussion on the same topic area. The candidates' understanding of the text is tested by 4 questions posed by their teacher examiner who then develops the conversation into a more general discussion of the topic area chosen by the candidate before the test. The general topic areas are as follows:

- Youth culture and concerns
- Lifestyle: health and fitness
- The world around us: travel, tourism, environmental issues and the Italian-speaking world
- Education and employment.

Candidates are free to choose any of the four general topic areas, according to their preference and interests. They should be advised to choose a topic area with which they are familiar and which they are prepared to discuss in detail. They will need to research their chosen area and undertake reading from a variety of sources. Candidates are given 15 minutes prior to their examination to prepare their stimulus text. During this time, they should study the text with a view to answering questions about it, offering their opinions about the subject of the text and the related subtopic, and to discussing the subject of the text in more detail. The Oral form, (see Appendix 1 in the specification), must be completed with the general topic area chosen by the candidate and the number of the stimulus used.

Assessment Principles

Up to **50** marks are awarded using the appropriate grids for **Quality of Language (16 marks, 8 for Accuracy and 8 for Range of Lexis)**, **Response (20 marks)** and **Understanding (14 marks, 4 Stimulus specific and 10 related to the General Topic Area)**.

Candidates' Responses

The majority of centres that entered candidates for the new AS oral examination in Italian should, in general terms, be congratulated on the thoroughness of their preparation. Many centres kept to the spirit of the examination, in allowing candidates to speak in a natural way within the broad topic area of discussion.

As in previous years, a good number of candidates reached commendable levels of linguistic competence. Many candidates were able to sustain their discussion well and offer interesting slants in their opinion of given topics.

There were still some cases of over rehearsal, although a few remained.

Rehearsed performances can be described as:

- stage-managed, in which candidates have learned everything by heart for the whole of part B and at times spent around 8 minutes regurgitating information, often leaving out information so that the conversation becomes largely meaningless.
- monologue, with little or no teacher participation.
- one centre, one topic, when a class had studied the same topic and the teacher examiner asks the same unpredictable questions to all

candidates and often candidates have also learnt the answers. This is often done in complete good faith but the lack of spontaneity severely limits the marks for Response. The repetition of language, often far above the candidates' real level of competence, can only result in poor levels of accuracy.

PART A

Generally speaking, less able candidates were unable to give a report of the content of the text without quoting verbatim from it. In some cases many read the relevant passage of the stimulus, making it difficult to assess their actual understanding. Others had been encouraged to give full answers to Q1 and pre-empted Q2, Q3 and 4. More able candidates put forward very interesting opinions and ideas and produced well developed answers. These questions also showed up the weaknesses of other candidates, who performed better in part B, as they had been able to prepare this. Some candidates offered little expansion and did not cover the required time needed to be spent on the first part of the oral exam.

PART B

This was on the whole well done, and candidates seemed less inclined to simply deliver pre-learnt material. Higher scoring performances were more markedly dependent on language skills. However, most candidates with just a modicum of language acquisition beyond GCSE level could adequately express some ideas and opinions about one or two topic areas despite faulty grammar and sometimes a fairly limited vocabulary could also display a use of the conditional and the subjunctive.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

This seemed to be the least popular topic area.

Stimulus 1 generated quality responses which were notably polarized - uniform either being seen as a repression of individuality or, in contrast, a way to banish social barriers and help students to focus. Stimulus 2 prompted students to identify their own personal view on what education should provide, and although the majority acknowledged the importance of respecting nature, their emphasis and focus was more on acquiring social skills and learning to respect rules. Many candidates reported the positive change in the relationship between pupils and teachers, developed in recent times, as an influential and positive factor for learning.

Stimulus 1A

Q2. Some candidates did not understand all reasons behind the decision taken by the headmaster.

Stimulus 2B

Q2. The characteristics of these nurseries were not always clear to the less able candidates

THE WORLD AROUND US

A growing interest in this topic was noted this year. Stimulus 1 rarely evoked unusual or original thoughts, with most students keeping to a safe framework. However, in some cases, the stimulus generated discussions about the behaviour of tourists abroad and the responsibility of schools to educate before geographical exploration. Stimulus 2 provoked candidates

to report the apparent ambiguity between embracing sustainability and modern life through the media encouraging consumerism.

YOUTH CULTURE AND CONCERNS

Once again, a very popular topic area.

With stimulus 1 some candidates were able to explore the topic, presenting original and interesting arguments, looking into social and economic aspects. However, in far too many cases, candidates regurgitated stereotypical views on over-protective parents or young people unable to take on responsibility. In stimulus 2, candidates recognised the change in social interaction caused by technology but also the opportunities offered by this change. The most popular discussions revolved around fashion and music as a way of identifying character and communality.

Stimulus 1A

Q2. Many less able candidates had difficulty in answering this question. Often they did not outline the difference between *ieri* and *oggi*.

Q3. Some candidates did not understand that they had to mention 2 points, economic and working situation.

Stimulus 2A

Q2. Very few candidates gave the full answer: many simply stated that young people go to bars to play videogames and use the internet, very few mentioned that they go for breakfast or for a quick lunch.

Stimulus 2B

Q2. Only the most able candidates gave the correct and full answer. However many did not outline the difference between past and present.

LIFESTYLE, HEALTH AND FITNESS

Another very popular topic area.

In stimulus 1, candidates were able to respond effectively to questions related to the article but had difficulty when the question required a more original and broader response. In stimulus 2, candidates were unable to comment on the finer details. In general, many questions revolved around the role of sport in society, the impact of physical activity on lifestyle and what schools and the government can do to support healthy lifestyles. "Fast foods" vs "a healthy diet" dominated the debate.

Stimulus 1A

Q 4 less able candidates were unable to comment on alternative medicines.

Stimulus 2A

Q2 Some candidates did not give all the reasons mentioned in the passage or gave other reasons as to why this hobby is popular now.

Candidates' performance in terms of linguistic criteria did not differ greatly from the previous exam series: the range was wide and well distributed, from very good performances – above specification requirements – to a moderate but nevertheless an extension of the linguistic skills required at GCSE level.

The range of lexis was good or even very good, but structures were very often limited and repetitive, with a large number of candidates not attempting any subordinate clauses. In the few case of scripted material,

structures were often too complex for the candidates' ability and resulted in very flawed performances with marked differences between parts A and B. Accuracy about agreements, gender and often verbs endings is still a problem even with more able candidates and errors in word stress remain frequent.

Common errors were:

- '*avantaggi*' instead of *vantaggi* ; '*disvantaggi*' instead of *svantaggi*
- confusion between the use of *migliore* and *meglio*, *peggiore* and *peggio*, *buono* and *bene*, *cattivo* and *male* (i.e. the use of adjectives instead of adverbs and viceversa)
- '*la problema*' instead of *il problema*
- pronunciation of *rischi*, *schermo*, *freschi* with the English 'ch'
- incorrect use of *piacere*
- in response to question 1, the phrase '*il brano parla che...*' instead of *parla di* or *dice che*
- relative pronouns: '*chi*' instead of *che*
- agreements: noun and adjective, verb and noun, etc
- if clauses with wrong tenses
- '*qualche giovani pensano*' instead of *alcuni giovani pensano*
- '*molte/molti gente*' instead of *molta gente*; *gente* followed by a plural verb
- intransitive verbs with *avere*
- infinitive form of verb instead of conjugated form
- '*perché*' at the beginning of a sentence, instead of *siccome/dal momento che/dato che*
- '*suoi/sue*' instead of *loro*
- '*gli umani*' instead of *gli esseri umani*
- '*la media*' instead of *i media*
- '*la maggioranza di*' instead of *la maggioranza di*
- '*affettare*' instead of *colpire*, *influenzare*
- '*i giovani diventano alcolici*' instead of *alcolizzati*
- '*gli animali sono coltivati*' instead of *allevati*
- '*dopo che sono graduato*' instead of *dopo essermi laureato*
- '*l'articolo si tratta*' instead of *l'articolo tratta di/nell'articolo si parla di*
- '*improverare*' instead of *migliorare*
- '*contribuare/contribuato*' instead of *contribuire/contribuito*
- '*gagnare*' instead of *guadagnare*
- '*cose aiutevoli*' instead of *cose utili*
- '*i chimici*' instead *le sostanze chimiche*
- '*confianza*' instead of *fiducia*
- '*la cambia*' instead of *il cambio/il cambiamento*
- '*la pianeta*' instead of *il pianeta*
- '*i veicolari*' instead of *i veicoli*
- '*edibile*' instead of *commestibile*
- '*expensivo*' instead of *caro/costoso*
- '*fisicale*' instead of *fisico*
- '*esclusato*' instead of *escluso*
- '*centrico*' instead of *central*.

Interesting Questions

Quali fattori sono importanti nella scelta della carriera?

Fino a che punto i genitori determinano la scelta della carriera dei loro figli?

Quale funzione sociale può avere la musica ?

Cosa si può fare per incoraggiare gli anziani ad usare la tecnologia?

Quali sono i vantaggi del telelavoro?

Pensi che le campagne di sensibilizzazione influenzino le abitudini alimentari delle persone?

Bastano le azioni individuali per ridurre l'inquinamento?

La tecnologia ha migliorato l'istruzione?

Sei d'accordo che gli sport tecnologici come la Formula 1, il motociclismo e lo sci alpino non sono dei veri sport?

Gli sport 'estremi' o pericolosi vanno proibiti?

Ritieni che il doping sia veramente 'frode sportiva' oppure un modo legittimo di migliorare le proprie prestazioni?

Per quali motivi si diventa vegetariani? Quali sono gli svantaggi e i vantaggi per l'individuo e per gli altri?

Perché la gente continua a non mangiare sano quando c'è tanta scelta e tutti sanno che frutta e verdura fanno bene?

Cosa pensi della tendenza moderna di mangiare davanti alla tv?

Bullismo: secondo te, perché una persona diventa bullo?

Perché i media continuano a diffondere immagini di bei corpi abbronzati quando sappiamo già tutti quanto sia dannoso il sole?

Cos'è per te un buon padre / una buona madre?

Che cosa pensi dei 'casalinghi' – i padri che restano a casa per badare ai bambini?

È possibile praticare il bullismo attraverso internet, MSN, sms, la chat?

Pensi che la musica che piace adesso piacerà ancora tra dieci anni? Perché (no)?

Perché certe persone cercano sempre di cambiare il 'look'?

Fra 50 anni, come studieremo, secondo te? Come cambierà il mondo della scuola e degli studi?

Pensi che sostenere un colloquio di lavoro a distanza possa avere dei vantaggi?

Con le recenti proteste contro l'aumento delle tasse universitarie, abbiamo visto una rinascita d'interesse per la politica tra i giovani?

È giusto fare sciopero per proteggere i diritti dei lavoratori? Ci sono delle professioni o dei mestieri che non dovrebbero avere il diritto di scioperare?

Fra 50 anni, come lavoreremo, secondo te? Come cambierà il mondo del lavoro?

Il turismo è sempre positivo? Che significato pensi abbia l'espressione 'turismo responsabile'?

Oltre il viaggio in sé, in quali altri modi si può conoscere bene un'altra cultura?

È giusto chiudere le scuole quando c'è la neve?

Perché la gente continua a vivere in zone a rischio di attività sismica o vulcanica?

Che cosa pensi del cosiddetto 'commercio equo' – stai attento quando fai la spesa a fare scelte ecologiche e solidali?

Che cosa sai dell'esperienza italiana di emigrazione? Perché ci sono tante comunità italiane all'estero?

Teacher Examiners

The exams were generally well conducted: the majority of teacher examiners and their candidates did extremely well. It was evident that a good number of teacher examiners had conscientiously prepared their candidates' topics eliciting very good performances from their students. However, there are some teacher examiners who tended to keep the conversation within the level of factual knowledge rather than encouraging the expression of opinions, and discussion and some who limit the number of questions in part B to 4.

Administration

There were some problems with the timing: in some cases the examinations were either too short or too long, but the most recurrent problem was the insufficient time given to part A. A recurrent problem was the rephrasing and/or expansion of the stimulus-related questions. This is to be discouraged as candidates can lose marks and it must be reiterated that, in the interest of fairness and comparability, candidates will be penalised if the examinations do not take place according to the specifications. It is therefore imperative that centres ensure that teacher examiners are familiar with the prescriptions which govern the conduct of the oral examination. Centres must include the oral form or the register and make sure they are using the correct stimulus cards.

The quality of recording was generally good but there were a few cases where exams were inaudible. Centres must ensure that recording equipment is in a good condition so that the recordings made are of good quality and can be marked.

Advice and guidance

Detailed advice and guidance can be derived from comments made throughout the report. In particular:

- candidates should choose a general topic area which reflects their personal interest
- the material should not only involve factual knowledge but also include opinion
- candidates should be prepared to give full and extended answers to the stimulus-related questions
- candidates should plan and prepare, not memorise, the discussion in part B.

Teacher examiners should:

- use the correct stimulus
- ask the 4 stimulus-related questions as they appear on the card, without re-phrasing or expanding them
- elicit opinions and not test for factual knowledge only
- ensure that sufficient time is devoted to part A
- move away from the topic of part A to more general discussion of the topic area
- ask genuine unpredictable questions related to the chosen topic
- give a hesitant candidate the chance to respond but don't correct or interrupt.

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